

MINUTES

At the Full Council Meeting held on Microsoft TEAMS on Tuesday 19th January 2021 at 19.00hrs.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: Bates, Bazan, Beaver, Blackmore, Blakemore, Brice, Bryant, Cavill, Drewett, Fuller (In the Chair), Halik, Hill, Hoar, King, Kirk, Oldrieve, Palmen, Piazza and Whiffen.

Officers: Mr L. Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Mrs J Weimar, Mrs A Quick (Minutes).

Public & Press: Wiltshire Councillors: J. Trigg & E. Clark.

Public: P. Egan, P. Jubbie, L. Marshall, B. Mitchell, and Sgt. L. Williams (Police).

Press: M. Mclaughlin (Wiltshire Times).

3424 APOLOGIES

No apologies were noted.

3425 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- a) **RESOLVED to approve** as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 17th November 2020 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 12th January 2021.
- b) **There were no matters to be considered.**

3426 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

- a. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Leisure & Information Services Committee held on 8th December 2020.
Cllr Kirk asked a question; *With the budget proposal I was very pleased to see that we can save money within the Active Trowbridge provision. However please may I have the information on how we were able to reduce the Active Trowbridge staff without an impact on the services we provide? I understand the staff reduction is through 'Natural Wastage' – what were these staff doing previously? Town Clerk responded "For many of our activities the full staff cost is not covered by income, therefore is subsidised by Council Tax/other income. The Government Furlough scheme does not cover/fully cover a range of employment costs such as National Insurance/pension and has varied in terms of the basic salary it covers. The furlough scheme does not allow us to claim for the pay rise which was implemented following commencement of our claims and backdated to April 1st 2020. The reduction of staff has been through natural wastage and as a result we have ceased providing services to almost all of the schools outside the Trowbridge area. We gave all of the schools adequate notice prior to September. We have not priced the business out of the market."*
- b. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Town Development Meetings held on 1st December, 22nd December 2020 & 12th January 2021.
- c. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Museum meeting held on 15th December 2020.
- d. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Neighbourhood Services meeting held on 15th December 2020.
- e. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Policy & Resources Meetings held on 3rd November 2020 & 5th January 2021.
Cllr Kirk highlighted that his comments were taken out of context therefore were misinterpreted in 3214 of the Civic Board Minutes.
Cllr Kirk noted the P&R Budget Report stated the general reserves notes include an incorrect date.

3427 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) There were no declarations of interest.
- b) There were no Dispensation Requests received by the Town Clerk and not previously considered.

Initials.....dated.....

3428 **COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR**

The Mayor reported on his attendance at the following events;

- 5 citizenship ceremonies at County Hall. Since Lockdown there haven't been any ceremonies to attend.
- Switching on Trowbridge Christmas lights.
- Represented the Council at the funeral of Roger Newman who was a friend of the museum and a member of many committees. This is a very sad loss to the town.

3429 **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

Questions from the public were received as follows:

Mr Mitchell – Matthew Ridley passed away on Saturday evening. He attended the War Memorial on behalf of the Royal British Legion for many years.

The value of the public forum was questioned. He feels it is a smoke screen as issues are not forwarded to the relevant people. Can TTC look at this to see if a new format could be established? He highlighted the issue with taxis, buses etc. causing issues outside the Town Hall.

Cllr Fuller suggests this needs reviewing and Cllr Palmen will take this on board.

Mr Jubbie – Meeting links have been added to the website as requested. He requested this last year so what has changed so that this is now possible?

Cllr Fuller stated we have experience with MS TEAMS which has proven it is possible to run meetings without problems which has given us this opportunity.

Regarding the Future High Street Fund, believes that misinformation has been published. Town Clerk has stated in the press that he doesn't know when the multi-storey re-development will happen. Please could the public have clarity whether or not the multi-storey is on the table for redevelopment?

Town Clerk answered there was a discussion about the loss of parking spaces. Cllr Fuller highlighted that whatever happens there will be consultation. It is the property of Wiltshire Council and the confirmation of money is yet to be finally decided.

Paul Egan – Thank you for the support and training on the SID at Cockhill. The SID has been well received but there has been some significant speeding and we would appreciate the results of this asap.

3430 **POLICE MATTERS**

A Police Report was received from Sergeant Leighton Williams;

We have moved to the enforcement stage for Covid breaches. Four new PCSOs have joined us on the Neighbourhoods Team and have been deployed across Trowbridge.

Cllr Hoar asked about Anti-Social Behaviour; PCSOs were not able to issue fines, is this still the case? Sergeant Williams responded yes it is but he will chase this up and bring it to the next meeting.

P. Jubbie thanked the police for their work on parking issues which have resulted in a positive result on the College Estate.

Cllr King stated that the SID admin noted that a number of cars have no MOT, tax and possibly insurance. Inspector stated that to issue a no-MOT offence he would have to identify the driver of the vehicle. No-tax powers have been suspended due to Covid.

3431 **QUESTION 2101071943 GENERAL RESERVES**

Questions from Councillor Kirk were considered and answered:

Question 1: Please can the Town Clerk as our Responsible Financial Officer advise what the Trowbridge Town Council position is in terms of General Reserve policy with this budget proposal and what our level of General Reserves will be at the end of 2022?

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Town Clerk's Response: The facts which provide this information are included in the budget report which was circulated to all councillors on 23rd December. If Councillor Kirk is having difficulty understanding the budget papers I am happy to hold a meeting with him to explain. The guidance is:

5.32. General Reserve

The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months Net Revenue Expenditure (NRE). NRE (subject to any planned surplus or deficit) is effectively Precept\Levy less any Loan Repayment and/or amounts included in Precept\Levy for Capital Projects and transfers to Earmarked Reserves. The reason for the wide range (3 to 12 months) is to cater for the large variation in sizes of individual authorities. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12 months NRE, the larger the authority the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with an NRE in excess of £200,000 should plan on 3 months equivalent General Reserve. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a General Reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size and situation and plan their Budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Changes in activity levels/range of services provided will inevitably lead to changes in the requisite minimum level of General Reserve in order to provide working capital for those activities

Question 2: Please can the Town Clerk as our Responsible Financial Officer advise what he would recommend as a budget allocation to General Reserves in 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25?

Town Clerk's Response: The facts which provide this information are included in the budget report which was circulated to all councillors on 23rd December. If Councillor Kirk is having difficulty understanding the budget papers I am happy to hold a meeting with him to explain.

Cllr Blakemore joined the meeting.

3432 **BUDGET 2021/2022**

Cllr Palmen introduced the Budget 2021/2022;

I'm pleased to present the proposed budget for 2021/22. It is a responsible budget, recognising the Covid climate we are in, but also proving the ability for this council to be ambitious for the Town and focus on the town's needs now and into the future.

If we momentarily reflect, this time last year, when setting the budget; we had not heard of Covid, furlough or a new meaning for the word shielding; yet we set a budget that has been able to withstand the unforeseen, a budget criticised at the time. That budget has proved to be a good, responsible decision that has allowed us to ride the Covid financial storm.

It allowed this Council to rise to the challenge of Covid and support this community. Staff were redeployed to the front-line, helping the vulnerable and the isolated. I must pay a big Trowbridge thank you to the people who work for the Council for their commitment, flexibility and support; you were great.

Because Trowbridge Town Council is well run, and here I thank officers for their management of the budget, we were able to maintain sound financial management, with adequate cash flow and still deliver the strategic plans for this year.

The refurbished Trowbridge Museum project with over £1.37M of external grant funding, is on schedule to open as soon as restrictions are lifted. And I will also pause here and thank the Officers and volunteers for their unstinting efforts to successfully conclude these ambitious plans during this difficult year.

The Refurbished museum has been part of the ambitious town development plan, drawn-up by us. Over the last 20 years we have transformed a moribund do-nothing Council into an effective force for change in the town. With a long-term business plan that has delivered a revitalised People's Town Park and a refurbished Civic Centre that the Town can be proud of. A Park with refurbished hard courts with lighting for extended evening use, well maintained play equipment for children, pleasant and well-maintained open areas for people and families to enjoy and a large space for community events. The foresight for long-term investment has proved its worth during the Covid pandemic and the Council has

Initials.....dated.....

done this and still maintained the Town precept to local residents well below many other towns in the area.

How has this ambitious plan been achieved? By leadership that has confidence in our Town, that wants to make Trowbridge better, by good financial management and investing in long term projects that have had the ability to encourage further external investment. Remembering here that an important factor in the development of the Cinema complex was the Town's investment in the Civic Centre. But we need to do more, this Town deserves even better.

Wiltshire Council has failed in its responsibilities to provide improved leisure facilities and cleaner streets. We want to fill this gap. We are fed-up with the prevarication by Wiltshire Council. We must act. We have invested in a street sweeping machine and a cleaning hit squad to deal with littered and neglected areas. But we want to do more to improve our Town and residential areas and are ready and willing to negotiate with Wiltshire Council to take on more. We know that the residents are not satisfied with the minimal efforts of Wiltshire Council and want the town council to get things done.

As we hopefully move into a post Covid world we know the negative impact lock-downs have had on people's mental health. We want to support people to become active again. We will use our Active Trowbridge team to work in partnership with schools and in our community, providing opportunities for sports and recreation. We want to invest in refurbished hard play areas in Studley, Longfield, Seymour and Paxcroft and have secured over £100K of external grant money, to provide better play facilities and opportunities. Trowbridge field sports have been blighted over decades with poor facilities, waterlogged pitches on muddy clay surfaces. We want to change this, we want first class facilities at Doric Park that will provide all the year-round field sports facilities. This will be achieved with no cost to residents, bring in over £800,000 in external grants to our community and provide additional opportunities for sport and recreation so sadly lacking in the County Town.

We can do this by identifying over £50,000 of savings this coming year, by a modest rise of less than 5 pence per week in the Council Tax Band D rates, by attracting over £1 million of external funding into the town and good financial management. We want to set aside a budget of £20,000 to give to charities in the town who will be recovering from Covid, to support those isolated and in need. We want to open the refurbished museum on Saturdays and Sundays when Covid restrictions allow, we want a better Trowbridge.

This ambitious programme will support the Town to participate in the exciting proposals to revamp the Town Centre. The Government grant of £16.3 from the Future High Streets Fund will allow a detailed plan for the town's redevelopment to be drawn-up. We are determined to play our part, we want to see a new swimming pool and sports facilities in the town, a re-vitalised market area offering places for people to shop, be entertained and meet. We already have a solid vision for a better Trowbridge.

I therefore recommend this budget to the Council; it recognises the stress in our community and the need to deliver a better future. It is affordable and ambitious, providing the resources to allow our Council to respond quickly to anything life may throw at us, whilst having clear achievable projects to make our Town better!

The Council considered the RECOMMENDATION from the Policy & Resources Committee;

Cllr Piazza opposes Cllr Palmen's view. The villages can access most of the services for free, such as the Museum. Cllr Piazza disagrees with this budget so proposes we transfer the Mayor's expenses to grants for the community.

Cllr Beaver stated Cllr Palmen's speech was coherent and visionary.

Cllr Kirk suggested the road sweeper was the late Graham Payne's proposal. He is concerned that we are going into a time where we will be most at risk as there may not be ongoing Government financial support. Also, there's instability and we are going forward with very low reserves.

Cllr Fuller suggests there is a chance Wiltshire Council will be charging TTC a proportion of the election costs which they haven't done before. Town Clerk states around £30,000 but this could be reduced as it will be held on same day as Police & Crime Commissioner and Wiltshire Council elections. Town Clerk reiterated that the sector guidance states minimum is 25% of net revenue expenditure. Cllr Whiffen stated concern at lack of reserves at P&R.

Initials.....dated.....

Cllr Bryant agrees this is a budget with vision and there wasn't an alternative put forward despite the opportunity. He realises that the tax is low in Hilperton but they don't get services such as those in Trowbridge. We all pay towards services such as schools and hospitals which we might not use but it's still right that we contribute.

Cllr Hoar is pleased we put money into reserves last year so it shouldn't be new to Trowbridge residents. Does the leader of Conservatives want to slash services to village levels? He understands Conservatives are trying to convince the council can't manage money. The £15 billion investment which was partly used to create the Civic Centre has encouraged the Cinema complex. The budget has great foresight as we come out of Covid we need to be ready to bounce back. We need to boost the Civic Centre and St Stephens Place.

Cllr Oldrieve will be supporting this budget as he believes we should take this council forward by supplying good play facilities, Active Trowbridge and a free museum.

Cllr King believes the budget is imaginative and making Trowbridge a first class place to live.

Cllr Piazza appreciates Neighbourhood Services. He believes TTC should save residents' money to spend on Grants. Cllr Piazza proposed an amendment to move the Mayor's allowance £3,800 to Grants to support the community. The Town Clerk advises this isn't a valid amendment as it fails to change the recommendation before the council. Allocations to departments were resolved at the Policy 7 Resources Committee and this change should have been done at P&R 2 weeks ago.

Cllr Hoar said that he spoke to Legal & General Senior Asset Manager who stated "The Civic Centre added credibility to creating a civic and cultural hub at this end of the town centre".

Cllr Kirk asked how HOS go in the budget?

The Town Clerk responded; As each HOS looks after more than 1 department, salaries are not allocated to individual departments.

Cllr Palmen stated that the last 4-year strategy hasn't changed. The leader of the Conservatives has not come forward with an alternative budget.

A recorded vote was taken, details are shown in the appendices.

14 in favour, 4 against, 2 abstain.

Therefore it was RESOLVED;

That the Council approves the department Budgets for 2021/22 (incl. loan finance) as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling £1,944,406

That the Council approves that the contribution to General Reserves for 2021/22 be £18,900

That the Council approves that a contribution to Earmarked Reserves for transfers from Wiltshire Council for 2021/22 be £0

That the Council therefore approves a total budget requirement 2020/21 of £1,963,306

And that this is funded in part through estimated income for 2021/22 from Community Infrastructure Levy of (£22,000)

Leaving a net precept requirement for 2022/22 of £1,941,306

Which results in an increase of £2.48 on the Trowbridge Town Council 'Band D' Council Tax Charge, to Which is less than £3.22 per week. £167.46

Initials.....dated.....

3433 MOTION: 2012151750 COUNCIL TAX

The Council considered the following **MOTION** proposed by Cllr Kirk, seconded by Cllr Piazza;

MOTION:

That Trowbridge Town Councillors who live outside of the Trowbridge boundary are requested to pay the Town Council, by means of donation, the difference between Council Tax Charges for the full period they have served on the Town Council, but been resident in another Parish.

Mr Jubbie asked if CIL is public money? Town Clerk responded that it is not 'public money' as it received from developers, not the public.

Cllr Whiffen states it is up to the residents who they elect so it should be put into their manifesto.

Cllr Hoar is concerned that if someone is on the border of the council area on a low income they could be precluded from the democratic process.

Cllr Bryant states that Cllr Kirk could have made a donation to TTC previously rather than waiting until a few weeks before the election.

A recorded vote was taken, details are shown in the appendices.

6 in favour, 14 against, 0 abstain.

MOTION LOST.

3434 MOTION: 2101072219 CIVIC CENTRE TOILET FACILITIES

A MOTION was proposed by Cllr Kirk, seconded by Cllr Cooper;

MOTION:

That when the Civic Centre is permitted to reopen and the staff return to their Offices, included within the flexible working arrangement is the requirement to do a few hours of their work in the Civic Centre foyer on the weekend to enable the toilet facilities to be accessible to the public.

Town Clerk's Response: Staff who are based in other departments cannot work in the Venue Services Office on a weekend without a significant impact on productivity. Staff have proved to be flexible during the pandemic, but this does not include working on weekends when they do not have access to their colleagues. When the Civic Centre was built it also included expansion of venue facilities including the Usher Suite, the Bar, the Council Chamber and the Bowyer Room, the provision of a new Information Centre and additional office accommodation which is now occupied by the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership as well as refurbishment of the existing Lansdown Hall.

Cllr Fuller confirmed that the motion stands referred to the P&R committee on 2nd March 2021.

3435 MOTION: 2101072252a ARMED FORCES EVENT

A MOTION was proposed by Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Kirk.

MOTION:

That Trowbridge Town Council uses the £3,000 funding originally budgeted for the Mayor's Dinner in March 2021 and allocates it to our new version of Wiltshire Armed Forces, bringing the total closer to the £7,000 original grant. If the event does not go ahead in 2021 due to the pandemic, we will rollover the amount to the following year. The Mayor's Dinner will instead be sponsored or simply not go ahead.

Cllr Fuller confirmed that the motion stands referred to the P&R committee on 2nd March 2021.

Initials.....dated.....

3436 MOTION 2101072252b PUBLICISING RECORDED VOTES

The Council considered a **MOTION**, proposed by Cllr Piazza and seconded by Cllr Kirk;

MOTION:

That Trowbridge Town Council creates a 'Democratic Services' Facebook page and publicises all recorded votes.

Cllrs Brice and Drewett questioned whether results of votes without reasoning is democratic. Cllr Palmen proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr Brice.

AMENDMENT to add and remove words as follows:

That Trowbridge Town Council publishes all recorded votes on its Discover Trowbridge Facebook page.

The amendment was accepted by the proposer and the seconder.

A recorded vote was taken, details are shown in the appendices.

17 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstain.

RESOLVED: That Trowbridge Town Council publishes all recorded votes on its Discover Trowbridge Facebook page.

3437 MOTION 2101072252c DRYNHAM LANE BIN

The Council considered a **MOTION**, proposed by Cllr Piazza and seconded by Cllr Kirk;

MOTION:

That Trowbridge Town Council funds a single bin located at the junction of Drynham Lane and Bradley Road. Trowbridge Town Council will use the £40,000 amount, set aside this year for WC transfers, to fund the emptying.

Town Clerk's Response: The total Council Tax at Band D for households in North Bradley is currently £1956.83 and in Trowbridge is currently £2099.78 and therefore the difference in total Council Tax is 7.31%. The properties in Drynham Lane represent approximately 8 Band D equivalents and will therefore contribute approximately £1,143.60 more in 2021/22 in parish/town Council Tax than they have in 2020/21. It would therefore be appropriate for the council to approve this Motion.

Cllr Fuller confirmed that the motion stands referred to Neighbourhood Services Committee on 30th March 2021.

3438 MOTION 2101072252d PUBLICISING MEETING LINKS

The Council considered a **MOTION** from Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Kirk.

A recorded vote was taken, details are shown in the appendices.

20 in favour, 0 against

RESOLVED:

a) That Trowbridge Town Council removes the barrier, where residents need to contact the council to receive a Microsoft Teams link before a public council meeting, instead simply adding the Microsoft Teams link onto their website and social media platforms.

b) That Trowbridge Town Council advertises the meetings, with the Microsoft Teams links, more widely on their social media pages and each time posts on Spotted Trowbridge.

Initials.....dated.....

3439 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND

The Council considered a **RECOMMENDATION**;

To provide a letter of support to Wiltshire Council for the success in achieving a provisional allocation from the Future High Streets Fund and to wish them well for the work to be undertaken to confirm the final funding so that significant investment can be made in Trowbridge Town Centre in partnership with the town council and others.

Cllr Piazza requested that both Wiltshire Council and The Government should be thanked.

Cllr Hoar highlighted that it is the job of the Government to distribute our tax money back to us and would like to thank Officers and others involved in achieving this bid.

Cllr Palmen stated this funding is not yet secured.

The Town Clerk confirmed a letter was also being sent to the Town hall to support their funding application to the Arts Council.

RESOLVED;

To provide a letter of support to Wiltshire Council for the success in achieving a provisional allocation from the Future High Streets Fund and to wish them well for the work to be undertaken to confirm the final funding so that significant investment can be made in Trowbridge Town Centre in partnership with the town council and others and thanks to the government and other organisations for their input and support for the allocation and to seek additional consultation.

3440 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Council considered the following **RECOMMENDATION**;

That the Council approves the sealing of a lease from Selwood Housing Society for the Hub at 80 Charles Street, Seymour.

RESOLVED;

That the Council approves the sealing of a lease from Selwood Housing Society for the Hub at 80 Charles Street, Seymour.

3441 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16th March 2021.

3442 MEDIA RELEASES

- Budget
- High Street Fund
- Publicity for Minutes of the Council

RESOLVED to approve: press/social media releases

Meeting Closed at 21.15

Signature

Initials.....dated.....

Trowbridge Town Council

Full Council meeting 19th January 2021

Working with the Community

NAME	BUDGET 2021/2022	COUNCIL TAX	PUBLICISING RECORDED VOTES	PUBLICISING MEETING LINKS
Bates	Green	Red	Green	Green
Bazan	Red	Green	Green	Green
Beaver	Green	Red	Green	Green
Blackmore	Green	Red	Green	Green
Blakemore	Green	Red	Green	Green
Brice	Green	Red	Green	Green
Bridges	Green	Red	Green	Green
Bryant	Green	Red	Green	Green
Cavill	Green	Red	Green	Green
Cooper	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
Drewett	Green	Green	Red	Green
Fuller	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
Halik	Red	Green	Green	Green
Hill	Green	Green	Green	Green
Hoar	Green	Red	Green	Green
King	Green	Red	Green	Green
Kirk	Red	Green	Green	Green
Oldrieve	Green	Red	Green	Green
Palmen	Green	Red	Green	Green
Piazza	Red	Green	Green	Green
Whiffen	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green

Carried Lost Carried Carried

For	Against	Abstain	Absent
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Initials.....dated.....